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A

Pacifick Discourse

OF THE

CAUSES

AND

REMEDIES

OF THE

DIFFERENCES

ABOUT

RELIGION,

Which distract the Peace of Christendom.

mr Smith Thomas Smith

LONDON,

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A pacifick diſcourſe of the cauſes and remedies of the differences about Religion which diſtract the peace of Chriſtendom.

HOW much the ſaving doctrine of the *Chriſtian* religion doth conduce to the eſtabliſhment of an univerſal peace in the world, beyond the utmoſt force and reach of humane wit and policy, it were to be wiſht, it could be as clearly made out by fit and ſuitable events, and by the lives and behaviour of *Chriſtians*, as it is moſt juſtly demonſtrable from the deſign of *Chriſt*, and the proper and genuine ends of ſuch an holy inſtitution. For with what juſt ſeverity doth that moſt perfect rule of life require of us to lay reſtraints upon our paſſions, and to ſtifle and ſuppreſs the firſt motions of them, leſt our ill will and diſſatisfactions break forth into enmity, and our enmity ſoon improve into downright malice and hatred! how doth it give and reſtore to the mind a full power of reducing unto reaſon all thoſe tumults and diſorders, which either anger or luſt are wont to raiſe! with what great care, even a care worthy of *God*, is it there provided for, that no one ſhould deſerve ill of his neighbour, nor ſo much as treat his enemy, as his enemy, that is, in a furious, diſdainful, and hoſtile way, but rather forgive him, and ſhew him kindneſs and mercy: that we ſhould be more afraid to do, or return, and revenge an injury, than undergo death it ſelf: that we endeavour to the utmoſt of

our

our power to do good to all, and in ſeveral caſes have leſs regard to our own than anothers advantage, and ſacrifice our lives and deareſt intereſts to the publick peace! Under what terrible ſanctions, and with what fulneſs and clearneſs of expreſſion hath the divine Author and eſtabliſher of the *Chriſtian* law enacted, that the rights of every one, whether founded in nature, or introduced by cuſtom and the common uſages of life, or by civil and municipal laws, ſhould in no wiſe, and upon no pretenſe whatever be violated, but be preſerved in their full extent and vigour!

How had the world been bleſſed with a ſolid and laſting peace, if theſe excellent rules had been obſerved, and if no unjuſt force had been uſed; if men had religiouſly and conſcientiouſly abſtained from invading the right and property of others, and had been content with that ſtate and condition of life, in which providence had placed them, without having recourſe to fraud and evil arts, or to violence and arms! Thus we ſee *Chriſt* hath conſulted moſt wiſely and effectually the peace and benefit of all mankind in general, beyond the inſtitutions of the moſt famous Law-givers whatever. But how more deeply and zealouſly concerned, and fuller of holy care was our *bleſſed Saviour* for all ſuch, as ſhould believe in his name, and make profeſſion of his religion in all ages of the world, that the mutual love, which the acknowledgment of the ſame Faith, which the partaking of the ſame holy rites and myſteries, and which the hope of the ſame immortal happineſs and glory to be enjoyed in the other world juſtly challenged, and required, and obliged them to upon ſo many excellent accompts, ſhould be continually kept up, and made appear at all times by an hearty deſire and readineſs of doing good in their ſeveral ſtations, and whenſoever an opportunity preſented it ſelf, by all offices of love and kindneſs! He was ſo intent upon this neceſſary and eſſential

tial part of *Chriſtianity*, in the laſt ſtage of his life, that in that divine diſcourſe, which he made to his Apoſtles, St. *John* chap. 14. juſt before he was to leave the world, and offer up his moſt pretious blood, as a juſt price and ſatisfaction for the ſins of mankind, he commends nothing more to their imitation, and makes this the great characteriſtick of his Religion: and ſhews, that nothing could be more dear and grateful to him, and more advantagious and beneficial to them, or could more powerfully and evidently ſhew their love to him, and better deſerve their care, than their punctual and diligent obſervance of this new command, that *they ſhould love one another, as he had loved them.*

Now this command being grounded on the greateſt authority, and the higheſt reaſon, and equity imaginable, and which cannot be violated without the imputation of impiety and folly, and without great hazard of Salvation, who would believe, that *Chriſtians* ſhould be ſo unmindful either of *God* or themſelves, as to dare to contravene it, as if they were not any longer to be known to be of that denomination, by reciprocal affection and charity, and by unity and harmony of mind, and by the moſt endearing acts of generous friendſhip, but by bitter invectives and reproaches, by ſiding with parties, and by diſagreement and hatred one of another?

It is a long time ſince, that the *Catholick Church of Chriſt* hath felt the ſad effects and conſequences of this fooliſh and mad perfidiouſneſs, even almoſt ſoon after ſhe was bleſt with peace, and freed from the horrid butcheries and cruel perſecutions of the heathen *Roman* Emperours, (who made it their buſineſs to keep up their idolatrous worſhip, with all the arts of ſubtilty and furious rage, and exterminate the very name of *Chriſtian* out of the world) and hath been forced to endure and ſuffer far worſe

worſe things from her own children, hurried on with the exceſſes of mad zeal, and all the bitterneſs of enraged paſſion: by reaſon of which unchriſtian misbehaviour ſhe ſoon perceived, that ſhe had but little reaſon comparatively to complain of the proceedings of *Nero*, *Decius*, *Dioclesian*, and the reſt of her mercileſs Perſecutors. For this was the ſad caſe and temper of thoſe times, that they, whom fear, and modeſty, and a due regard to, and reverence of the name of *Chriſtianity*, and whom common dangers and ſufferings had endeared to each other, to the great aſtoniſhment of their enemies, now when they no longer ſtood in awe of the tribunals of the *Gentile* Magiſtrates, and of the purſuit and arreſt of ſoldiers and officers of the civil Courts; when they were no longer in danger of being dragged to priſon, or condemned to croſſes, ſtakes, gibbets, and wild beaſts in their Amphitheaters; when by the protection of the civil power they might profeſs *Chriſtianity* with all poſſible ſecurity, the whole Empire becoming *Chriſtian*, and embracing that faith, which it had for ſome ages before endeavoured with ſo much fury and madneſs to root up; theſe very perſons, abuſing this wonderful change, that *God* had brought about, when they had no enemies to exerciſe their faith and their patience, ſoon grew peeviſh, and froward, and inſolent towards one another.

The doctrine of faith, as it is propoſed in the holy Goſpels, was ſlighted and carelеſly paſt over, and fierce conteſts aroſe about matters of opinion and ceremony, as if nothing leſs than eternal ſalvation had been concerned in theſe niceties; whence charity being wholly forgot and loſt in theſe diſputes, whilſt each ſtrove, not ſo much for truth as victory, evil ſuſpicions and animoſities took place, and opened a wide gap for ſchiſm to enter. Hereupon Altar was erected againſt Altar, and contrary Epiſcopal Sees eſtabliſhed

bliſhed in the ſame cities; and furious and ſeditious Preachers ſounded in the Pulpit an alarum to a holy war, as if they had been ready to engage with the profeſſed enemies of *Chriſt* in defence of the chief articles of Religion. Hence they firſt lookt upon it as a piece of becoming zeal, and as a mark of godlineſs to abſtain from all external communion with each other: as if the danger and the guilt had been leſs to have been preſent at the *Heathen* and *Jewiſh* aſſemblies: afterwards followed odious crimes laid to each others charge, and moſt abuſive and execrable titles and appellations, as if there had been a total apoſtaſy and defection from the *Chriſtian* faith; from which moſt unjuſt and ſcandalous cenſures there aroſe at laſt an irreconcileable enmity and hatred, which no art, no compliance in other matters, whilſt theſe evil and perverſe opinions were rooted in their minds, could be able to remove or mollify.

But alas! ſo far are theſe dreadful and fatal heats, with which the Church for ſo many ages has been enflamed, from being abated, that upon the addition of freſh matter they have burſt out with greater violence, which is almoſt irreſiſtible. Who is there ſo far forſaken and devoid of good nature, mercy, and pity, who is not filled with horror, when he reflects upon thoſe horrid tumults and diſtractions, with which *Chriſtendom* is torn aſunder at this very day? I do not mean thoſe diſtractions the natural effects of war, wherein thouſands are daily ſacrificed to ambition and other brutal paſſions, but ſuch, as different opinions about matters of religion have brought upon the world, in which no mercy and charity are ſhewed to the ſouls of the adverſe party, which, as far as furious zeal takes place, are conſigned over to hell by peremptory ſentences of excommunication: it being accounted a very godly and juſtifiable pretenſion, to think and judge amiſs of thoſe, who differ from them in leſſer matters.

In the mean time, whilſt every one doth fooliſhly indulge to his ambition, fame, and wit, whilſt they moſt partially favour that ſide, which either chance has caſt them upon, or prejudice, education, and intereſt have recommended to their choice, whilſt the love of the world, and a fear ariſing thence, leſt there ſhould be any abatement and diminution of their ſecular pomp and advantage, ſhut out truth; and whilſt perverſneſs and obſtinacy of mind ſet a bar againſt mutual forbearance and condeſcenſion: altho out of modeſty each may pretend to wiſh, that an happy end were put to theſe diſputes, and endeavour with great earneſtneſs to wipe off the envy of ſuch a charge: yet it is too too evident, that they are kept up and maintained by pride and peeviſhneſs and baſe intereſt, whilſt they do not *follow*, according to the excellent and wiſe advice of St. *Paul, after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. Romans* 14. 19.

It is the deſign of this paper briefly to enquire, firſt into the reaſons and cauſes of theſe differences ariſing about Religion, which are ſtill maintained with ſo great heat, to the great ſcandal of ſo holy and venerable a Profeſſion, and how it comes to paſs, that the mild, the ſweet, the merciful temper and genius, which *Chriſtianity* inſpires her true Votaries with, ſeems utterly loſt, amidſt the noiſe and fury of thoſe hot debates, that prevail between parties of different communions: and then, ſecondly, into the proper remedies of theſe horrid confuſions and diſtractions, and ſee if there be any juſt reaſon and ground to hope for the reſtoring of Eccleſiaſtical peace and unity to the divided countries of *Chriſtendom*.

As to what concerns the firſt part of my enquiry, I ſhall comprehend the original and cauſes of the diviſions among *Chriſtians*, and which hinder them from uniting in the ſame common worſhip and ſervice of *God*, under theſe four following

following heads; all others being of leſſer moment, or elſe eaſily reducible to one of them.

The firſt and principal is this, a manifeſt and great departure from the ſimplicity of faith.

In the firſt beginnings of *Chriſtianity*, when the Apoſtles, every of them in their diſtinct provinces, declared to the world the revelation of *God* our Saviour, it was not, as to what concerns the doctrine of faith, any great matter of difficulty, nor required any great ſtudy or deep reſearch to be a *Chriſtian*. The myſteries of it, as to their number, were but few, as is evident from the *Creed*, which contains a brief form of words, clearly and nakedly propoſed without any perplexity or ambiguity of expreſſion; ſo that although the matter of ſome of them do tranſcend the utmoſt ſtrength and force of humane underſtanding, and cannot be comprehended by the moſt ſublime and ſubtle wit whatever: yet perſons of the meaneſt capacities and moſt ordinary underſtanding cannot complain, that they were neglected. Now this doctrine of faith was at firſt one & the ſame every where, even in the moſt diſtant countries, which had no commerce one with another. At that time they believed no otherwiſe at *Rome*, *Epheſus*, *Alexandria*, or *Corinth*, than at *Jeruſalem*.

The Apoſtles being guided by the ſame infallible ſpirit, taught the ſame neceſſary articles of faith every where: whence aroſe that admirable concent and harmony of doctrine, as if that great work of the converſion of the world to the faith of *Chriſt* had not been done apart, but had been jointly carried on by the common advice and direction of the College of Apoſtles remaining in a fixed place. For then thoſe here in *Britain* agreed in judgment with thoſe who were in *India*, when there was no paſſage through the great and vaſt ocean known, or ſo much as attempted: the polarity of the magnet being then unknown and undiſcovered: And the like is to be ſaid of the other parts of the world, as *Irenæus* ſhews in his firſt book againſt hereſies

chap. 3. where being about to evince the truth of the *Catholick* faith from the agreement of so many nations, differing in language, and manners, and customs of living, so many seas running between, he adds, *that there is the same force of tradition, notwithstanding this great variety of language, and that the Churches in* Germany, Spain, Gaule, *in the* East, *in* Egypt *and* Lybia *neither believed nor delivered down contrary doctrines: but as the Sun, the creature of God, is one and the same in the universe, so the light and doctrine of truth shines every where, and enlightens all men, who are willing to come to the knowledge of it.* So that all being admitted by the Sacrament of baptism to the profession of the same faith, if chance or business, or curiosity of travelling brought *Christians* of different nations together, upon the first acknowledgement of this faith, which shewed, that they were *Christians*, they run into each others embraces, and found, that they agreed in the same points of religion, as if they had been bred up under the same masters, and had spent their whole time together.

And indeed it could scarce be otherwise through the piety, innocence, zeal, and constancy of those times, not as if there were no opinions started, about which they might have different sentiments (for that in such great variety and disproportion of understanding and temper was scarce possible) but they held fast to the *Apostolical* doctrine and tradition: and provided, that their faith in *Christ* was entire and orthodox, in lesser matters liberty of judgment was allowed without censure. No one was oppressed with unjust suspicions and prejudices: they shunned not such an ones company, as if he had been excommunicated, but received and embraced him as a *Brother* and *fellow Christian.*

The holy *Apostles*, who by their unwearied diligence and preaching had form'd and establisht Churches every where, that they might make just provisions for the *Christians* of all

all ages after their deceaſe, thought it highly concerned them to commit to writing the doctrine of faith, which they had taught; that in caſe any doubt ſhould ariſe in aftertimes, and new doctrines ſhould be introduced by wanton and over curious wits, deſirous and over apt to innovate in matters of religion under a pretenſe of Apoſtolical tradition, theſe infallible oracles might be conſulted, as the meaſure and ſtandard of divine truth. Accordingly to theſe ſacred writings they had recourſe as to the only rule of faith: they derived all the ſtreams of ſaving truth from theſe uncorrupt ſprings; here was the tryal, whether any one was *ſound or reprobate concerning the faith*: ſo the great truths of Religion were preſerved entire; there was no trouble given to any one upon the accompt of any ſubtle or nice queſtions. All equally enjoyed the ſame right of communion; they were preſent at the ſame holy offices of religion with a moſt agreeable piety; they all were partakers of the ſame holy Sacrament; from which if any were by the ſtrict diſcipline of the Church debarred, it was wholly to be imputed to the miſcarriages of life, whereof they were guilty, which the Church deſired to amend and make them ſenſible of by this ſevere courſe and method.

But when the pertinaciouſneſs of Hereticks, relying upon the quirks and ſubtilty of unſound wit, would in no wiſe acquieſce in *Scriptural* propoſitions of faith; when with a ſacrilegious boldneſs they would break into the very ſecrets of heaven, which were above the capacity of humane underſtanding fully to make out and comprehend; when deſpiſing and rejecting the revelations of *Scripture*, they diſclaimed the profeſſion and acknowledgment of the truths and myſteries of the *Chriſtian* religion; and when by their evil deſigns, arts, and practices, the weaker ſort of *Chriſtians*, whom they had infected with their corrupt and poiſonous doctrine, were drawn away from the profeſſion of the

the true faith; it then became neceſſary and moſt worthy the ſerious thoughts and care of *Conſtantine* the great, and the other pious Emperors, to call *General Councils*, in order to prevent thoſe diſturbances and breaches of the *Churches* peace, which were likely to ariſe from the change and alteration of faith: and all the induſtry of thoſe great men, who were ſummoned to attend and aſſiſt at thoſe ſolemn and venerable aſſemblies, was laid out and imployed, not in inventing and making new *Articles*, but in interpreting and explaining the old ones: for both their zeal and piety forbad, that they ſhould give way to any innovation, or ſuffer the ancient *Catholick* faith, which was at firſt delivered, to be antiquated, and the profeſſion of it diſuſed. For to uſe the words of (*a*) *Vincentius Lirinenſis*, *what other thing has the Church of Chriſt deſigned and effected by the decrees of Councils, but that that which was before ſimply believed, might now be believed with greater diligence: that, which before was more rarely and gently preached, might now be preached with greater zeal and concern: and that, which was held and maintained more ſecurely, might now be ſtudied and maintained with greater care and ſolicitude?* So that to ſtop the mouth of hereſy, and to give it its deaths wound, thoſe Heroes, moſtly and chiefly relying upon the authority of the ſacred ſcripture, and calling in to their aid and aſſiſtance the conſtant practice and conſent of the *Orthodox Chriſtians* of the preceding ages, and antient and *Catholick* tradition, made a moſt excellent proviſion for the ſecurity of the *Chriſtian* faith, which *Arius*, *Macedonius*, *Neſtorius*, and the other infamous *Hereſiarchs* had with their falſe gloſſes perverted, by laying down ſhort forms and profeſſions of faith: that ſo the ſeveral myſteries of it, upon the belief of which the true religion and the happineſs of its Profeſſors depend, might be better and more eaſily admitted and underſtood.

(*a*) Commonitor. *cap.* 32.

By

By this *Teſt* the *Catholick Church* diſtinguiſhed thoſe of her communion from the hereticks, and by this unity of faith united their hearts in love and affection; all who made profeſſion of her doctrine, in what part of the world ſoever they were, being acknowledged and received for friends, for brethren, for Catholicks. For there was no need of any other character or recommendation: and hence that pious and laudable cuſtom and practice of keeping up and maintaining this *Eccleſiaſtical* communion by the *Epiſtolæ formatæ*, which were uſually ſent from one Biſhop to another (nor did the Biſhop of *Rome* exempt himſelf) upon their inſtalment, had their original: nor was there any other proof exacted or demanded of their retaining the profeſſion of the true Chriſtian faith, than a firm and hearty aſſent to thoſe antient Creeds.

How happy it had been for the *Catholick Church*, if the terms of communion had continued thus enlarged, the meaneſt capacity may eaſily be ſenſible of; for moſt aſſuredly, if the antient faith, the profeſſion of which has ſaved ſo many myriads of *Chriſtians*, had been preſerved uncorrupt and entire from the encumbrance and addition of novel opinions, which owe their original and propagation to meer phantaſy, and ſuperſtition, and ſecular intereſt; and if all, who acknowledge that *Faith*, might have been preſent at the publick worſhip and ſervice of God upon the ſame conditions, as in the firſt ages, according to the rules eſtabliſhed by the ſupream *Eccleſiaſtical* authority; there had not been that great confuſion every where in the world, as now there is. By this juſt and eaſy method, ſchiſm might have been prevented, and a liberty of judgment being allowed in matters no way fundamental and eſſential to faith, an eternal peace had been eſtabliſhed.

Of the violation of which we juſtly accuſe the *Roman* Church, which, having wholly neglected and laid aſide the

the rules of *primitive Antiquity*, has, as miſtreſs of the faith of all *Chriſtians*, obtruded new articles, under the ſpecious pretenſe and title of *Declaration*, upon their conſciences and underſtandings. But what injuſtice, what arbitrary proceeding, what tyranny is this, that the faith of the *Chriſtian* world ſhould depend upon the humor and pleaſure of the *Roman* Court, and the opinions of the *Schoolmen*, without any regard to *Scripture* and *antiquity*: and that all other Churches ſhould be excommunicated, unleſs they enſlave themſelves to her Tenents, and that all ſhould be branded with the odious name of *Schiſmatick and Heretick*, who dare maintain and defend their rights againſt the impoſition of their novelties! Let the true faith be examined by the rule of *Scripture*: let the doctrine of the firſt times be conſulted in the proof and tryal of it; let the antient canons be reſtored: let no force be put upon the conſcience, and let all unjuſt conditions ceaſe, and be for ever abrogated; the peace of the *Church* will then return, and we may hope to ſee good days in *Chriſtendom*. Which ſuggeſts to me an other hindrance of *Eccleſiaſtical* peace and unity, which ariſeth hence,

2. That ſeveral opinions and tenents, which without prejudice to the true faith, we may be ignorant of, are too highly valued and eſteemed, and by an overhaſty and inconſiderate zeal are lookt upon as fundamental points, neceſſary to ſalvation.

The Apoſtle Saint *Paul* takes a particular and wiſe care in the 14th chapter of the epiſtle to the *Romans*, leſt they, who agreed in the Faith of the *eternal Son of God*, the true Meſſias and Redeemer of mankind, and were called by his bleſſed name, ſhould upon ſome little differences in trivial matters, break out into hatred and ill will one to another. For there was not the ſame opinion among them about the ceaſing of the *Moſaical* inſtitutions. They who had arrived

arrived to a greater degree of faith and maturity of judgment, very much rejoyced in their happy change and condition of life, that they were delivered from the grievous burden of the *Jewiſh* rites and ceremonies, whilſt others, who were not ſo well inſtructed and ſatisfied in the priviledges and liberties of the *Chriſtian* religion, very fiercely contended, that no one, at leaſt no *Jew*, was exempt and freed from thoſe obſervances. Hence proceeded bitter and ſevere cenſures one againſt another, as tranſgreſſors of the divine law; and hereupon they entertained thoſe unjuſt opinions of one anothers condition as to the other world, as if one heaven could not hold two ſuch contrary parties. But what ſays the Apoſtle to all this? he plainly ſhews, that this ſharp, cenſorious, and fierce temper of mind is moſt diſpleaſing to him, as being moſt diſagreeable to the very rules of *Chriſtianity*: that in an affair of ſo ſlight a nature, no one runs the hazard of his ſalvation; that the ſtrong were herein to indulge and yield ſomewhat to the weak in faith, who were not ſo fully enlightned, as they were; that they who thought that there was an obligation ſtill lying upon them to obſerve the law of *Moſes*, had not upon this accompt abjured the faith of *Chriſt*, and that they, who on the contrary thought that there was no obligation lying upon them, had not been guilty of the breach of a divine law: that they were not to abſtain from communicating with each other: that in theſe matters a liberty of judgment was not to be denyed, ſo they had a right faith in *Chriſt*; that this common faith, in which both parties agreed, was a ſufficient ground of *Chriſtian* communion: and laſtly, that they were to be more ſtudious of peace and mutual edification, than of uſeleſs controverſies, which contributed little or nothing to the advancement of *Chriſtianity*, or to their own mutual be-

nefit and advantage, or to the encreaſe of piety, and good manners.

With what greater modeſty and moderation had ſuch, as having laid aſide all thoughts of peace for the ſake of opinions of far leſſer moment, have gone about to make diviſions in the *Catholick* Church, have carryed themſelves, if they had imitated this Apoſtle in this his moſt exemplary meekneſs and lenity! *Haſt thou faith?* Sayes this wiſe and excellent perſon; *have it to thy ſelf before God.* Let every one enjoy his own private opinions, of which ſort there may be many, for the ſake of which we cannot, without the higheſt injuſtice, give way to furious paſſion and ſtrife: at leaſt, if they cannot retain them in their breaſts, but have an itch of venting them; let them not impoſe them upon others, as oracles, as if all, who do not aſſent to them, were in a deplorable condition. The caſe is the ſame about particular *Churches*, as about private men: whilſt each retains the entire doctrine of the *Catholick* Church, let them make what laws, articles, and conſtitutions they ſhall think fit, to oblige their own members to *uniformity*; this certainly being a privilege, which is eſſential to every *national Church* in order to its better eſtabliſhment. If theſe controverſies concerning private and particular opinions had been confined to the *Schools*, with a ſalvo to conſcience and free judgment, by the fierce *diſputants* on either ſide, the *Church* might have received no prejudice and damage by them, and have been wholly unintereſted in their quarrels.

For this is to be allowed and permitted to humane wit, to be naturally prying into ſecrets and myſteries, and moſtly to pleaſe it ſelf in new ſpeculations: and this it may do lawfully enough, ſo it doth not paſs thoſe due boundaries, which *Scripture*, the *Creeds* of the *Catholick* Church, and

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ſober reaſon have ſet and fixt. Let the *Schoolmen*, overrun with the itch of curioſity, wrangle eternally, if they pleaſe; ſeeing they not onely delight in it, but make it their trade and buſineſs to perplex and entangle the moſt obvious truths: although it is very apparent, that in theſe eager and ſharp contentions, they aim more at victory and reputation than at truth: and let them enjoy the fame and credit of being accounted great *Sophiſters* and *wits*: Let them flatter themſelves, that they can explain the moſt difficult problem, and ſatisfy the moſt confounding objection with their nice and ſubtil diſtinctions: let them enjoy their phanſy or their judgment, without the leaſt diſturbance and cenſure: ſeeing ſome are ſo in love with their errors, that they hate to be better inſtructed; and to go about to convince them, is the way to diſoblige them: provided all this be done as a tryal of wit, and as an exerciſe of a plodding brain. I add further, let any particular *Church*, to prevent all diſputes, which may have an influence upon its peace, and which, by the cunning contrivance of deſigning men, may introduce ſchiſm and diſorder, make a body of *articles* and *canons* to be ſubſcribed by all, who are entruſted with the adminiſtration of holy things, as an inſtrument of peace and concord: and where they pretend to ſtate and determine controverſial points, let them be eſteemed by thoſe of that *Church* never ſo pious, never ſo credible, never ſo probable, no harm can poſſibly ariſe, ſo long as the ſummary of the *Chriſtian* doctrine is not violated; ſo long as they are not ranked with the fundamental articles of faith; ſo long as they do not impoſe them upon other Churches, who are no way ſubject to a *forraign* juriſdiction; much leſs upon the whole body of *Chriſtians* in all the parts of the Univerſe, under the pretence of *Apoſtolical authority*, and under the heavy

penalty of an *Anathema*. But that there ſhould be no difference put between the novel opinions of the *Schoolmen*, and the Oracles of *Scripture*; that the ſame deference and honour ſhould be paid to humane authority, very obnoxious to paſſion and error, which only infallible truth can juſtly challenge; that the phanſies of private men, as they were at firſt, ſhould, many ages after, by a pretended *Church-power*, be reckoned as fundamentals: and laſtly, that we ſhould be obliged to profeſs our aſſent to raſh ſanctions and definitions, which a corrupt part of the *Church* for ſecular ends and advantages hath decreed and eſtabliſhed; this, this is that, which ſcandalizeth *Chriſtendom*, and obſtructs its peace.

This was the juſt complaint of the former century, which made way for the *Reformation*, and which a conviction of the truth and reaſonableneſs of it extorted from the mouths of ſeveral *Romaniſts*, who yet had not the courage to relinquiſh the communion of that Church, though confeſſedly corrupt in matter of doctrine, diſcipline, and worſhip. This was the trouble and heart-breaking of ſeveral excellently learned and pious perſons in thoſe times, and doth ſtill diſtract the minds of all good men, even of conſidering *Romaniſts*, not infatuated with ſuperſtition and furious bigotry, who pray for the reſtoration of *Catholick* unity among all *Chriſtians*. But ſuch a ſchiſm, ſo deteſtable, ſo deplorable, and ſo big with diſmal effects, conſequences, and events, has been brought into the Church by corrupt intereſt, by baſe and diſingenuous artifice and ſubtilty, and by the higheſt immodeſty, and by downright force and violence, and this, confirmed by the free, holy, œcumenical council of *Trent*, as they call it, when God kno vs it was neither free, nor holy, nor œcumenical, as that all hope of reconciliation among the different

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profeſſions and perſwaſions of *Chriſtians* is taken away, unleſs the Authors of this ſchiſm ſhall offer terms of an accommodation fit to be accepted, that is, by annulling or ſuſpending for ever the authority of the *Tridentine* council, which is a thing not to be expected from them, or rather, unleſs the Princes of the *Roman* Communion ſhall force the *Pope* to call another Council, and in caſe of refuſal, ſhall aſſemble ſeveral Biſhops and Doctors of their reſpective countries to debate the controverſies, which are now on foot, and to determine them by *Scripture, primitive Antiquity, and Apoſtolical Tradition.*

It will yield juſt matter of aſtoniſhment to the ſerious Reader to conſider, that the inſtitution of the holy Sacrament of the *Euchariſt*, which *Chriſt* left to his *Church* in remembrance of his paſſion and death, and for a pledge of his love, and as a mark and token of the mutual love of *Chriſtians*, and of their faith in him crucified: whom that Sacrament does truly and efficaciouſly repreſent and exhibit, ſhould by the ſubtilty of the Devil, and the perverſe diſputings of intereſted perſons, be ſo far abuſed and perverted, that they ſhould hence take occaſion of envying eternal ſalvation, purchaſed by his precious bloud, and of denying it too, as much as in them lyes, to ſuch, as are partakers of thoſe holy myſteries according to his original inſtitution.

For what other reaſon can be alledged for that fury, which under the notion and pretext of zeal, has taken up arms; as if the cauſe of *God* were concerned in it, and has brought that great confuſion upon the world, unleſs becauſe they have different notions and ſentiments about this tremendous myſtery, and diſagree ſomewhat in their explications of it? What great quantity of *Chriſtian* bloud has been ſpilt by an enraged party upon the accompt of theſe unhappy *Sacramentary* quarrels, which have ended in bloudy

bloudy wars and Massacres! What great havock and wast have they made, both by fire and sword, of thousands of their *Fellow Christians*, beyond the fury and madness of the *Heathen* persecutions, who were in all other points innocent, and were therefore burnt, and had their throats cut, only for this one great crime, because they would not admit, believe, and acknowledge, contrary to scripture, reason, sense, and experience, the portentous and extravagant fiction of *Transubstantiation*! There is no *Christian*, but believes *Christ* to be really and truly, that is, spiritually, and to all the real effects and benefits of his Passion and death, and by the efficacy of his grace and Spirit, present under the sacred *Symbols*, which yet retain their true and natural substance, as well as qualities, and that he receives the mystical body of *Christ* after the consecration, according to the words of the institution, upon which the faith of all Christians is founded, and what has been professed in all ages, and justly esteemed the badge of *Christian* communion by all sober persons, whose judgments have not been perverted by passion and unjust prejudice. If every one, without any curious enquiry into this mystery, had contented himself with the plain and simple belief of it, and with all due care had intended the worthy partaking of it; if the Church of *Rome* had not first of all in the *Lateran* council, and after that in the council of *Trent*, rashly determined the manner of the presence of *Christ* in the sacrament: if the *Lutherans* and others had onely determined for themselves, without prescribing to, or condemning others; and if an explicite belief of this monstrous opinion had not been made a necessary term and condition of communion; how might we have adored before the same altars, (from which we are now excluded as profane, unworthy and excommunicate persons, and from which we have reason to abstain and fly,

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as the primitive *Chriſtians* did from the ſacrifices of *Idolaters*) and have been preſent at the moſt ſolemn ſervices of religion with the ſame zeal, to the great advantage of *Chriſtian* charity and devotion. No Prieſt would then have been afraid to admit any devout lay-perſon, approaching the holy ſacrament with due preparation; and no lay-perſon would then alſo have been afraid to receive it from the hand of ſuch a Prieſt, rightly ordained and conſtituted.

The like may be ſaid of many other points of religion, which without any prejudice to the doctrine of *Faith*, are diſputed and controverted: but whilſt, all other interpretations and expoſitions being laid aſide, men boldly decree and determine this or that opinion to be *de fide*; whilſt the niceties of the *Schoolmen*, and the poſitions of contentious and Polemical *Theology*, which idle men, relying too much upon their ſubtil wit, and falſe and ſophiſtical way of arguing, have introduced, are in ſuch eſteem and vogue with ſome, as to be lookt upon, as neceſſary appendages of the *Chriſtian* religion; and whilſt articles of faith, which were altogether unknown to the firſt ages, are hugely encreaſed and multiplied, as is too too manifeſt from the preſent ſtate and condition of the *Roman* Church, and the obſcure confeſſions of other Churches; what other effect can we expect ſhould proceed from this mighty induſtry and zeal, but that *Chriſtendom* being divided into ſo many parties and factions, all juſt hope of union ſhould be wholly removed and taken away, when the effecting of it hereby ſeems to be rendred morally impoſſible?

3. The arrogant pretenſions of the *Popes* unbounded power contributes not a little to the heightning and augmenting the difference in *Chriſtendom*. It does not ſeem at this day to comport with the greatneſs of the *Roman* Church, to be content to be included within the antient limits

limits of the *Suburbicary* regions. For not ſatisfied with a Primacy of order, or with her antient Patriarchate, (to whoſe juriſdiction the *Britannick* Churches were not of right ſubject) or with her other privileges, conferred upon her out of a reſpect to the *Imperial* city; as if the ſpirit of the old *Romans* were infuſed into her, ſhe proudly affects an empire over the whole body of *Chriſtians* throughout the world.

If the other Patriachs, who owe that honour and dignity to the ſame original, the favour of Princes, and the decrees and conſtitutions of *general Councils* (in the aſſignment of which, as it is moſt evident from the 28th Canon of the Council of *Chalcedon*, they had onely a regard to the privileges and dignities of cities, to which the *Eccleſiaſtical* government was accommodated) defend their rights and liberties againſt the attempts and encroachments of the Biſhop of *Rome*; if they will not ſubmit to a forraign yoke; unleſs they with a baſe and a moſt unbecoming flattery adore *Rome*, as their Miſtreſs and Patroneſs, and obey her decrees and orders; preſently there is an end of them: they are arraigned and accuſed as guilty of ſchiſm; nor ſhall they be thought worthy of the honour and favour of her communion. When ſome time after the Empire was divided into *Eaſt* and *Weſt*, there ſeemed to be a kind of agreement at leaſt, and a fair and amicable correſpondence kept up, the ambition and pride of the Biſhops of *Rome*, who would needs buſy and intereſt themſelves in the affairs of the *Greek* Church, ſpoiled all. For to no other cauſe can the original of that ſad and fatal ſeparation be aſcribed, altho it was afterward heightned, and the wound feſtered more and more, when the article of *the proceſſion of the holy Spirit from the Son* was added to the *Conſtantinopolitan Creed*, without ever ſo much

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as conſulting the *Oriental* Biſhops, who upon the knowledge of it ſoon after vehemently oppoſed it; juſtly alledging, that it was utterly unlawful ſo to do, it being expreſly againſt the 7th canon of the council of *Epheſus*. But things were more ſecurely advanced and carryed on in the *Weſtern* Empire, by the artifice and policy of the *Popes* of *Rome*: for the oppoſition, which was made now and then by two or three honeſt and ſtout men, to their tyrannical and arbitrary proceedings, ſignified little or nothing, and was run down with noiſe, violence, and power.

When then they had no regard to the canons of antient *Councils*, by which the *Catholick Church* was formerly governed; when they had trodden under their feet all divine and humane law and right; when they had arrogated to themſelves the diſpoſition of all *Church-affairs*, and had uſurpt a power over all *Chriſtians*; and nothing for the future was to be admitted and believed, but what was agreeable to the *Bulls* and *decrees* of the *Roman* Court; can any one wonder, when things were brought to this paſs, that *Chriſtendom* ſhould at laſt awaken from its deep lethargy, and grown ſenſible of the miſerable ſlavery of its condition, ſhould complain of the exerciſe of this uſurped, unjuſt, and tyrannical power, and ſeriouſly think of recovering its true, antient, original *Chriſtian* liberty? In the mean time, what did they at *Rome*? did they enter upon ſerious counſels and reſolutions honeſtly and effectually to ſatisfy the requeſts and demands of *Kings*, *Princes*, and *Republicks* concerning a *Reformation*, which were continually ſent thither by their Ambaſſadors and Agents? did they reſtore their ill-gotten goods, which they had ſeized upon moſt unjuſtly, and as unjuſtly had detained by force and violence, I mean, the common rights and privileges,

belonging to the *Biſhops*, and to all *Chriſtian* people? nothing leſs: they exclaim, they rage, they are furious and mad, and let fly their thunderbolts of excommunication from the *Vatican hill*, and devote men to hell and damnation, only for this unpardonable fault, becauſe they were at laſt quite tyred with, and weary of the ſlavery, which they had laboured under for ſo many years. This is that, which troubles and grieves them now at *Rome*, and which they are endeavouring with ſo much art and policy to effect and bring about; and this is that, which unleſs *God* ſhall vouchſafe to avert the omen, and open the eyes of all ſuch, who are deluded by the witchcrafts and ſorcery of *Rome*, to forſake her communion, which is ſo dangerous to their ſalvation, will make the ſchiſm irreconcileable and eternal. For, as things ſtand at preſent, there can be no peace and accommodation with *Rome*, unleſs we part with our liberties, and our laws, and our conſciences, and our religion, the true *Chriſtian* religion, and every thing, which is dear to us: nor yet, ſuch is the reſtleſneſs of that party, and eſpecially of the *Jeſuits*, that if the counſels of ſuch fiery *Bigots* may prevail, we ſhall never be at quiet, unleſs we ſubmit our necks once more moſt ſtupidly to the *Roman* yoke, which our *Popiſh Anceſtors*, even both before and after they were enlightned with the knowledge of the truths of *God*, threw off with great indignation, as not being able to bear it.

Laſtly, we are convinced by ſad experience, that theſe differences about religion, which have divided *Chriſtendom* into ſo many ſects, to the great diſturbance of its peace and quiet, owe no ſmall part of their original to the great decay of true ſolid piety through idleneſs and careleſneſs, and to the departure from the moſt holy rules of living, which *Chriſt* our bleſſed Lord and maſter has preſcribed

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us, which is every where ſo viſible. I need not here labour in the proof of this by heaping up arguments, when the fact is ſo evident; nor ſhall I tragically exclaim or inveigh againſt the unmanly ſoftneſs, the luxury, the prophaneneſs, the wickedneſs of the age, and the evil lives of *Chriſtians*; this reflexion deſerving our ſighs and tears rather than ſatyre and invective.

I do not here mean ſo much thoſe, whoſe wicked & corrupt principles and moſt ſcandalous lives ſufficiently ſhew, that they have no ſenſe of any religion, but I chiefly intend ſuch, as make a fair ſhew of *Chriſtianity*; how little of true piety is found about them! but how much of ſuperſtition, and immoderate zeal for the peculiar tenents of their ſect, by which they would be diſtinguiſhed one from another! in compliance of the genius of the age, which is concerned more for ingenuity, and learning, & the inventing new hypotheſes, and ſatisfying curious enquiries into nature, than for the practices of moral honeſty and *Chriſtian* vertue, and how we may foyl and baffle our adverſaries by our wit, rather than adorn our holy profeſſion with ſuitable lives. But alas! by how much leſs pious we are, ſo by degrees we become more and more cenſorious and uncharitable. We beſtow all our zeal in leſſer matters, and lay the great ſtreſs of our duty upon it, being little ſolicitous about the ornaments of a *Chriſtian* life, as if by this fallacious and flattering kind of artifice we would compound with *God* for the want of them. It is in vain to complain of, and cry out upon the wickedneſs of the times, when we our ſelves are to blame, that they are no better, and if we would our ſelves, we might make them ſo. For if the true *Chriſtian* piety, and ſtrict diſcipline, and integrity of manners, were but once reſtored; and if we throughly minded the great duties of *Chriſtianity*, which conſiſt in unfeigned devotion and holi-

neſs, in charity, and meekneſs, and patience, and forbids all bitterneſs, and wrath, and evil ſpeaking, and hatred, and malice, and abſtracts from all niceties and ſubtilities of diſputation, and quarrels about *Scholaſtick* notions and opinions, in which the eſſence of faith is no way intereſted; it will be no vain, idle, or ill-grounded expectation, that we might live to ſee the different parties of *Chriſtendom* united, and *Eccleſiaſtical* peace and unity reſtored. But whilſt ill manners and a careleſs way of living prevail; whilſt charity and modeſty are laid aſide, and men grow over-wiſe and conceited in their opinions, and deſpiſe all others of a contrary judgment; whilſt to be of a *Party*, and to maintain private phanſies with fierceneſs and heat, is accounted a good argument of their being godly; whilſt being too much concerned for the externals of religion, and controverſial points, we over-look our duty, and growing ſecure and careleſs, ſeem to have little or no regard to what *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles command us to look after with all poſſible care and diligence, and make our moſt ſerious ſtudy and buſineſs; who can be ſo void of ſenſe or good nature, as not to obſerve with grief and ſorrow of mind, that by this ill imployed induſtry, and by theſe furious quarrels, *Chriſtianity* ſuffers, and that, new prejudices ariſing continually, the evil diſtemper grows worſe and worſe, and will ſoon become deſperate and incurable? No ſerious and honeſt Reader can be ſo unjuſt, as to imagine, that I plead for a toleration of vile ſects and opinions, or that I think it a matter of meer indifference, to what communion of *Chriſtians* we betake and joyn our ſelves. We of the Church of *England* are obliged to render unfeigned and hearty thanks to *Almighty God*, for his great mercy and goodneſs towards us, that he has made us members of ſuch an eminently pure and *Apoſtolical* part and branch of the *Catholick Church*;

Church; that we were born and baptized, and live in the communion of a *Church*, whoſe doctrine is truly *Chriſtian* and *Catholick*; government primitive and *Apoſtolical*; and *Liturgy* conformable to the antient ſtandard, and agreeable to the uſes of true devotion, without the leaſt mixture of ſuperſtition and foppery; and where the Sacraments are adminiſtred according to *Chriſts* holy inſtitution: and where all things neceſſary to make a true *Orthodox Catholick Chriſtian*, and to render him eternally happy in the other world, are to be found and met with.

It highly becomes us in point of duty to be very ſenſible of this great bleſſing: and it ought to be the great comfort of our lives and deaths too: yet I cannot but oppoſe to all unjuſt cenſure that expoſtulation of Saint *Paul*, *Romans* 14. 4. *Who art thou that judgeſt another mans ſervant? to his own maſter he ſtandeth or falleth: yea he ſhall be holden up: for God is able to make him ſtand:* and will further add, that I doubt not in the leaſt, but that at the dreadful day of judgment a virtuous, honeſt, and ſober life will be more eſteemed by *Chriſt* himſelf, than niceneſs of knowledge and opinion, be it never ſo true; that no one who has adorned his *Chriſtian* profeſſion with an agreeable converſation; notwithſtanding his errors and miſperſwaſions, if they be not aggravated and made pernicious by obſtinacy of mind, and a wilful reſiſting and refuſing the truth, will be rejected, and that thoſe who now out of a furious zeal, (if yet there be any who do this, beſides ſome of the fiery men of the Church of *Rome*, who arrogantly call themſelves *Religious*, and their credulous & infatuated *Proſelytes*) deny or ſcarſe own ſalvation poſſible to others, who are not of their communion: which is a moſt unwarrantable, impudent, ſcandalouſly falſe, and unchriſtian opinion, the wickedneſs of which cannot be ſufficiently aggravated:

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of what party of men ſoever, and are thus uncharitable one to another, if an holy and virtuous life be ſuperſtructed upon the foundation of faith, in which they all agree, by the grace and mercy of *God*, and the all-ſufficient merits and ſatisfaction of Chriſt, will be happy hereafter for ever in heaven.

Hitherto of the cauſes of thoſe quarrels about Religion which diſtract the quiet and peace of *Chriſtendom*. Let us now briefly conſider the remedies. In general, it is moſt evident, that all endeavours about compoſing theſe differences, are in vain and to no purpoſe, and that we cannot entertain the leaſt ground of hope, to attain to the unity of the *primitive Church*, unleſs all parties relax their cenſures, which have hitherto excluded love and charity, and make uſe of the ſame means in reſtoring it, as the *Chriſtians* of the firſt times did in retaining it. If with compoſed and ſettled minds and affections we would agree in this excellent method, we have no reaſon to deſpair, but that the pacifick counſels and pious endeavours of honeſt men, who labour after the bleſſed work of union and reconciliation among *Chriſtians*, might be very ſucceſsful. Now the means of obtaining this *Eccleſiaſtical* peace, conſiſt in the removal of the cauſes above-mentioned, which have obſtructed it, and are theſe.

Whereof the firſt is, that the antient, ſimple, *Chriſtian* faith, as it is contained in the *Scriptures*, ſummed up in the *Creeds* of general Councils, and received in all the Churches of *Chriſt*, be only urged as neceſſary to be believed in order to ſalvation. For ſeeing that this common faith was made uſe of by the *Catholick* Church, as a tye and bond of holy communion; ſeeing the *Catechumens*, after prævious inſtruction, upon their profeſſion of this faith, no other condition being exacted, were admit-

ted

ted to *baptiſm*, and had a right to partake of the holy myſteries of the *Euchariſt*; ſeeing that in the profeſſion of the ſame faith, all true *Chriſtians* do fully agree; (for the *Socinians*, who go about to overthrow the whole frame of the *Chriſtian* doctrine, by arrogant preſumptions of falſe reaſonings, and by ſophiſtical arguments, and by their blaſphemies againſt *Chriſt*, the eternal Son of *God*, and turn the grace of *God* into the laſciviouſneſs of humane wit, and deny the divinity of our *Saviour*, are not to be honoured with this name:) why ſhould not the foundation and ground-work of *Eccleſiaſtical* peace and unity, after the example and practice of the *primitive* Church, be laid in the ſame faith? with what pretenſe of reaſon ought any opinion, after the firſt preaching and eſtabliſhment of the *faith* all the world over, after the conveyance of it down to ſo many ages, be ſuperadded as a neceſſary point of *faith*, which was unknown to all Antiquity? by what right can ſuch a number of articles be obtruded upon the underſtandings and conſciences of *Chriſtians*, and eſpecially ſuch, as have been invented and propagated for baſe and ſecular intereſts and advantages, and to maintain worldly grandeur and reputation? That *Chriſtians* do ſo little agree in ſome of their ſentiments about Religion, as if there were not the ſame rule of faith, equally and under the ſame obligation propoſed to all; this muſt not be imputed either to our B. *Saviour*, or his *Apoſtles*, or to the nature of his Religion, which propoſes in eaſy terms and Propoſitions, to the moſt ordinary and leſs intelligent *Chriſtians*, enough to conduce to their obtaining eternal ſalvation, but to certain fiery *Zealots*, who venting their beloved tenents and notions for oracles, impoſe them upon others under direful curſes and Anathema's. What fuller proof and argument

argument can there be of this furious zeal, than what the *Romaniſts* are guilty of, in inveighing againſt us, as they do moſt falſly and unjuſtly, for not receiving ſeveral tenents, which are but of a few ages ſtanding, and which are deſtitute of all authority, whether of *Scripture* or *Antiquity*? But this is our comfort, (if yet it be any comfort to perſons in diſtreſs, to have any to ſhare with them in it) we ſhall not be condemned alone: but at the ſame time they condemn us, they muſt draw into the guilt of the ſame hereſy, as they are pleaſed moſt civilly to word it, all ſuch, as have a true and juſt veneration of uncorrupt Antiquity: and for this reaſon among others, reject the Creed of Pope *Pius* the fourth. But if we are to think well of the condition of thoſe, who in the firſt ages preſerved the integrity and purity of the *Chriſtian* faith with *Creeds*, and other holy writings, as ſo many ſacred amulets and preſervatives againſt the infection and poiſon of hereſy truly ſo called; who were ambitious of dying, and loſt their lives for the profeſſion of that *faith*, and embraced the flames rather than diſſemble or diſown it; if the primitive Saints and Martyrs be happy and bleſſed; we need not fear the noiſe of their thunder, which can do no execution upon us, and which are meer bug-bears to affright perſons of weak and childiſh phanſies: we tread in the ſteps of thoſe holy Saints and Martyrs; we are ſafe, we are ſecure; provided we copy out their lives, and imitate thoſe glorious examples they have ſet up of conſummate piety, as well as profeſs the ſame faith. Wherever the *Chriſtians* were diſperſed, whether in the Patriarchate of *Rome*, or *Alexandria*, or any other; by virtue of this Profeſſion of faith, they were received into communion

and

and admitted to the common rights of Religion, not denying or envying to each other ſalvation in the world to come, but by joint exerciſes of devotion mutually promoting and advancing it: nay their charity was ſo great, that notwithſtanding the moſt unchriſtian cenſures and unjuſt Schiſm of the *Donatiſts*, they lookt upon them as Brethren ſtill, though horribly perverted by a falſe and ignorant zeal to make a ſeparation from them; nay they did not paſs a damnatory ſentence upon (a) the *Arians*, nor altogether deſpair of their ſ ation, but left them to ſtand or fall to their own Maſter.

(a) *V. Salvian. de gubernat. Dei lib. 5. p. 100. ix editione Baluzii.*

2. Upon and after a ready acknowledgment of the articles of faith, without which no one can pretend to be a *Chriſtian*, let a liberty of judging in other leſs material points of doctrine be allowed and indulged: for variety of opinions does no more diſſolve the unity of faith, than variety of rites and ceremonies. How had that wide wound, which ſchiſm has made in the body of the *Church*, been long ſince cloſed and perfectly healed, if this ſoveraign medicine had been applyed, and if they had not proceeded ſo dogmatically and boldly, by confeſſions of faith, and by new and unheard of canons to determine points uncertain and doubtful! by which way of procedure the minds of *Chriſtians* are oppreſſed, and the doctrine of *faith* rendred perplext and obſcure by *ſcholaſtick* ſubtilties and niceties. It were to be wiſht indeed, that all *Chriſtians*, and eſpecially thoſe, who, for moſt juſt and weighty and indiſpenſable reaſons and motives, have relinquiſhed the *Roman* communion, could agree in a general ſyſteme of *Theological* opinions: but becauſe this is not to be hoped for, conſidering the different apprehenſions, tempers, inclinations, intereſts, judgments, way of education, method of ſtudy and argu-

ing, and interpreting ſcripture, and conſequently there not being the ſame light of knowledge, the ſame force and ſharpneſs of wit and underſtanding, the ſame induſtry and impartiality; why ſhould we not for peace and quiet ſake bear with others, who, though they may differ from us in ſome particulars, agree with us in fundamentals, as they are contained in eaſy texts of *Scripture*, and in the ancient *Creeds*, with all *Chriſtian* charity, and compaſſion, and moderation? Let that evil cuſtom of reviling, which is almoſt become habitual and natural, and that odious calling of names and branding private notions with ill characters, if they may admit of a more favourable interpretation, without prejudice to the eſſential truths of the *Goſpel*, for ever ceaſe, and be totally laid aſide. For by this mutual indulgence and condeſcenſion, which all Lovers of peace cannot but acknowledge to be moſt fit and equitable, there is no one whatever, be his capacity never ſo mean and dull, but he will foreſee and preſage, that a mighty benefit would redound to *Chriſtendom*, and a happy ſtop would be put to the diſorders and confuſions of it.

3. Let the antient canons about *Church-government* be reſtored to their full vigour, and every *National Church* enjoy its juſt rights, and the Biſhop of *Rome* be reduced to his original juriſdiction, and all pretenſions to an *Oecumenical* power for ever be aboliſhed and annulled. For the *Romaniſts*, in the height of all their pride and uſurpations, which have violated the peace of the *Church*, of which they cannot but be convinced in their conſciences, may remember, that communion with their Church was never held neceſſary, but onely, as it was a part, and branch, and member of the *Catholick* Church. Beſides, who can be ignorant of the great diſputes maintained

tained with the See of *Rome* in antient and latter times, by the *Christians* of other communions, in defense of their rights? The Churches, both in the *East* and *South*, divided into several Patriarchates and Bishopricks, vindicated their privi'eges, which they enjoyed according to the decrees of the Council of *Nice*, in their several limits and districts. The title of *Universal Bishop* was not then known or pretended to: no one had either the vanity or the ambition to usurp such an unlimited power.

This honour was reserved for Pope *Boniface* the third, and his Successors, as if all the world hence forward were to be included within the walls or *Pomœria* of the city of *Rome*. The world was astonished at this procedure, and could not with any patience admit and suffer so great an imposition. *Christian Carthage* despised the insults of the Bishop of *Rome*, as much as their *Heathen* Ancestors did the *Senate*: and although *Constantinople*, unwillingly enough, allowed the honour of the first, and chief See to *Rome*, yet it ever maintained its own liberty: and though now horribly oppressed and sadly groaning under *Turkish* tyranny, is not so forgetful of its ancient honour, as basely to submit to the claims of *Rome*. They would very willingly retain communion with her, and with all the branches of the *Catholick* Church, if the hinderances of that communion were once removed, and that pretended *universal* authority laid aside: in which holy desire we join with them. Let the Bishop of *Rome* be the first of that order; provided, that he be not lookt upon, as the sole *universal* Bishop; and that all others be deemed to be, as indeed they are, by the constitution of *Christ* and his *Apostles*, independent, and not his *Vicars* and *Deputies*: and provided

vided alſo, that their rights, which rely upon the ſame *Eccleſiaſtical* laws, be reſerved to them in their full and juſt extent; and that the decrees of the *Roman* Court be not impoſed upon the world with a *non obſtante* to *Apoſtolical* conſtitutions; and that its juriſdiction be contained within the limits of the antient Canons. If this bar were removed, a way would quickly be opened to let peace into the moſt divided parts of *Chriſtendom*. This all good *Chriſtians*, all but ſuch worldly-minded men, whoſe intereſt it is to keep up theſe differences, earneſtly wiſh, ſigh, and pray for, and would readily unite upon theſe honeſt and juſt conditions, if truths neceſſary to ſalvation were only propoſed to be believed, according to the antient forms; if all fiery cenſures and excommunications were utterly condemned and aboliſhed; and if ſuperſtition were removed from the ſervice of *God*, and the publick offices of Religion.

Unleſs this be done, we muſt, as in the preſence *of God, and his holy Angels, and all mankind*, lay the ſchiſm at the *Romaniſts* door, and wholly impute it to them, that the *Catholick Church* does not enjoy the great bleſſing of *Eccleſiaſtical* peace. In the mean while, we of the Church of *England*, are very ready to admit of any conditions of obtaining this moſt bleſſed and glorious end, provided that by them the peace of our conſciences be not violated and diſturbed; that they do not contradict and thwart the principles and analogy of faith; that the Scripture, and its beſt and moſt genuine interpreter, Antiquity, be admitted to have the higheſt and only lawful authority in determining controverſies of faith; that no prejudice be done to *Eccleſiaſtical* Government; and laſtly, that all things be tryed by the rules and canons and cuſtoms, which were in uſe in the firſt ages of *Chriſtianity*, by which the *Catholick*

lick Church was then governed. O happy, O bleſſed, O glorious day, in which all theſe confuſions, which no good man can think of without great diſorder of mind, ſhall be removed, and all, who worſhip the ſame crucified *Saviour*, ſhall unite in brotherly love, charity, and communion! But the wicked lives of *Chriſtians*, and baſe ſecular intereſt will not permit us to expect ſo great a bleſſing. We muſt firſt endeavour to reſtore the piety, the ſtrictneſs, the humility, the diſintereſtedneſs of the antient *Chriſtians*, before we can pretend to the ſame hearty unity.

But alas! we degenerate from their examples: religion is no longer lookt upon as a rule and inſtitution of life and manners, but is turned into an art of diſputing, and our vices alienate our minds from all thoughts and deſigns of union: pride, and malice, and naughty affections, and love of worldly ſplendor and greatneſs ſhut out all hope of peace. It muſt be the work of *Almighty God*, and the wonderful effect of his Providence and grace, to diſpoſe the hearts of the *Chriſtian Princes*, and great Eccleſiaſticks of the *Roman* Communion, to ſet upon this great deſign of *reforming* in order to a perfect union and agreement: and I doubt not, but thouſands of that communion, eſpecially in the *Gallican* Church, where they have ſet bounds to the exorbitant power of the *Pope* by their late decrees, in compliance with the antient canons, and in vindication of their own privileges, and where they begin to be aſhamed of ſeveral groſs errors, which have hitherto paſſed for good, wholſome, Catholick doctrine, as appears by their new *Expoſitions*, and *Interpretations*, and *Catechiſms*, long to ſee this happily effected: for which purpoſe it becomes us all, to put up inceſſant prayers to *God*, that all, who call, and own, and profeſs themſelves *Chriſtians*, may *remember from whence they are fallen*

fallen and repent, and ever after exercise themselves in the practices of all *Christian* virtues, and in *the acknowledging of the truth, which is after godliness*, that laying aside all vain jangling about lesser matters, they *may follow after things, which make for peace and mutual edification*, and that being *guided and governed by the good spirit of God, they may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith, the truly Christian, the truly Apostolical, the truly Catholick faith, in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life*. May the God of all mercy and comfort at last restore unity to his Church, now labouring under grievous distractions, for the merits and intercession of our blessed Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*. Amen.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

PAge 16. line 30. for *contributes* read *contribute* l. 31. for *difference* r. *differences*.

Books Printed for *Sam. Smith* at the *Prince's-Arms* in St. *Pauls* Church yard.

COncio ad Clerum habita coram Academia Cantabrigienſi *Junii* 11. An. 1687. Pro *Gradû Baccalaur.* in S. Theologia. Ubi Vindicatur *Vera* & *Valida* Cleri Anglicani, *ineunte Reformatione*, Ordinatio. Cui acceſſit Concio habita *Julii* 3. 1687. De *Canonicâ* Cleri Anglicani *Ordinatione*, Latinè reddita & aucta. A T. *Browne*, S. T. B. *Coll. D. Joh.* Evang. *Soc.* Annexum eſt Inſtrumentum Conſecrationis *Matth. Parker* Archiepiſcopi *Cantuarienſis* ex MS. C. C. C. *Cant.*

The State of the Church of Rome *when the Reformation began, as it appears by the Advices given to* Paul III. *and* Julius III. *by Creatures of their Own. With a Preface leading to the Matter of the Book.*

Remarks upon the Reflections of the Author of Popery Miſrepreſented, *&c. in his Anſwerer, particularly as to the* Depoſing Doctrine? *In a Letter to the Author of the* Reflections. *Together with ſome few* Animadverſions *in the ſame Author's* Vindication of his Reflections.

Jacobi Uſſerii Archiepiſcopi *Armachani*, Opuſcula Duo, Nunc primùm Latinè Edita: Quorum alterum eſt de Epiſcoporum, Et Metropolitanorum Origine: Alterum De *Aſia*

sia Proconsulari. Accessit Veteris Ecclesiæ Gubernatio Patriarchalis, Ab E. B. Descripta. Interprete R. R. E. B. P. Præterea accedit Appendix, De Antiqua Ecclesiæ Britannicæ Libertate, & Privilegiis,

Miracles Work's above and contrary to Nature; Or, an Answer to a late Translation out of Spinoza's Tractatus Theologico-Politicus, *Mr.* Hobb's Leviathan, &c. *Published to undermine the Truth and Authority of Miracles, Scripture, and Religion, in a Treatise Entituled* Miracles no Violation of the Laws of Nature.

The Difference between the Present and Future State of our Bodies considered in a Sermon, by Jeremy Collier, M. A.

The Life of St. Mary Magdalene *of* Pazzi, *a Carmelite Nunn. Newly translated out of* Italian *by the Reverend Father* Lezin de Sainte Scholastique, *Provincial of the Reformed Carmelites of* Touraine. *At* Paris, *For* Sebast. Cramoisy *in St.* James's *Street, at the Sign of Fame.* 1670. *And now done out of* French: *With a preface concerning the nature, cause, concomitants, and consequences of Ecstasy and Rapture, and a brief discourse added about discerning and trying the Spirits, whether they be of God.*

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